

KINGS & QUEENS



FLORENCE WILKINSON





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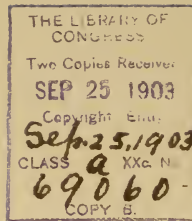
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Kings and Queens





The Portrait of Belinda



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PROLOGUE

David and I



ON a certain November day David and I, despite several obstacles, were as happy as the proverbial kings and queens. With this pleasant frame of mind the weather had naturally something to do, for not even kings and queens may sink below the soothing influence of sweet winds and pretty weather. Also, we were in the first flush of hearing our names thus indissolubly linked together. But the Castle-in-Spain wherein young happiness knows itself lord had not fallen to our lot. More truly, we had not gone abroad to claim our patrimony. Instead, we shared a town apartment with Great-Aunt Susan. I have known of some who became so familiar with their ancient relatives two generations removed that the qualifying epithet was dropped. Not so with Great-Aunt Susan, upon whom the title bestowed a congenial magnificence, such as one associates with Charlemagne or Frederick of the Tall Grenadiers. Yet nothing stood in the way between us and our inheritance, whether it were a temple in Arcady or a tent

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in the forest of Arden—nothing except the lingering city habit and the austere spectacles of Great-Aunt Susan, through which medium, by force of long training, I still occasionally viewed the world. But we were very rich, having simple tastes and little money, and neither income nor expectations to be lived up to. Happily, David was of that profession which liberates its devotees to the freedom of wood and field.

The morning was seductive, like a memory of September, stealing back to have a look at its old domain.

"Let's take the runabout," said David, "and Sweet Emma Moreland, and go for a drive."

"But you should be painting," said I.

"And you inditing a sonnet!"

"And both of us following the Real-Estate sign."

We fell a-musing till David suggested that we might go driving and still be thus trebly employed. We took an umbrella with us, in case it rained; a sunbonnet, should the wind blow away my hat-with-the-violets; painting-traps for David, and lunch for the appetite that would surely wait upon us both.

"Crazy children," said Great-Aunt. "Where are you going, and how long will you be gone?"

I, in the early glow of married emancipation, laughed easily.

"We are going Nowhere-in-Particular," answered David, "and we shall be gone ever so long."

Sweet Emma Moreland whinnied persuasively.

"What do you mean?" asked Great-Aunt, adjusting her spectacles. "It's November, no time of the year for gipsying."

"Indian summer," I pleaded.

"So full of atmosphere," added David. He flicked his whip toward the purple hill line against which the steeples and chimneys lost themselves.

"Smoke!" said Great-Aunt, contemptuously.

"It interests us," said David. "There is where we are going. Maybe we shall return for dinner, and maybe not."

Emma Moreland curved her neck to observe our goal and by various springy enthusiasms testified her approval.

"You are as much a gipsy as we; aren't you, Sweet Emma Moreland?" said I, stroking her satin nose before I climbed into the wagon. "Good-bye, Aunt Susan."

Soon we reached the purple hills beyond the chimneys and steeples. It was eleven o'clock recess in a suburban school-yard as we drove along. The children were whooping out-of-doors as if it were dandelion time.

"Did I ever whoop like that, I wonder?" I remarked, meditatively.

"A few more miles, dearest, and you may do so again," replied David, astutely.

It was a blue bath of a morning, like May, only dreamier, mistier, rarer. The pale pastures were stroked with gentle shadows, the trees were velvet-

trunked like pastel drawings, the rambling walls and fences were almost the colour of the sky, so saturated were they in luminosity. It was a Puvis de Chavannes landscape of delicate colours and austere exquisiteness. The foliage was scant, tufts and splatterings and fringes of palest blonde and copper. Emma Moreland, when we spoke her name, turned back at us a pensive white forehead and a liquid eye full of vague appreciation. She was unchecked and unblinded and sensitive to all harmony. Nor did she despise a casual nibble that the wayside might afford, when the intelligences behind her themselves went afield.

Toward nightfall we were still on the road and enveloped in a shimmering lavender sunset. Warm savours of summer came to us from mint banks where a brook babbled. The effulgence spread and deepened to rose madder.

"A pink twilight," cried David; "I have been waiting ten years to paint one."

"You need wait no longer," said I.

He set up his easel and went to work, while I and Sweet Emma watched and criticised, with discrimination born of long patience at our rôles. By-and-by it got colder, as the light waned. I ran up and down the road, reciting "The Splendour Falls," which always warms me. Emma Moreland comforted herself with farther and still farther expeditions for botanical discovery.

I had just reached that line, which I freely para-

phrased, "O love, I die for that rich sky." Into this I was able to infuse a wealth of personal feeling. I put cold finger-tips on David's forehead.

"Frappé!" he exclaimed, seizing my hand and kissing it back to warmth. He wiped his brushes. "Do you see that little star between the folds of those hills?" He waved his palette westward and then to the corresponding light that flickered on his canvas. "It gives the human touch, doesn't it, and at the same time carries out the keynote of mystery."

"Something more human and less mysterious appeals to me this moment," I suggested, as David put me into the runabout. Emma Moreland was persuaded to abate her scientific zeal and to resume the journey.

"That's where we shall spend the night," said David, pointing to the little star in the folds of the hills. It grew larger now and flung out a penumbra of yellow rays. To me it became more attractive as it enlarged itself, but David said it had lost the subtle charm of the undefined. I was glad, however, when it defined itself in unmistakable terms as the lamp in the kitchen window of a farmhouse.

The people were a little surprised to see us, especially when in answer to one of their questions we were obliged to confess that we did not know where we were going or how we had come. David showed them his picture, and when I explained that the light between the hills was the lamp in their kitchen window, they were so pleased that their

hospitality knew no bounds. The man allowed it was a dull season for house-painters, and he didn't blame a man for picking up odd jobs. The woman asked if I had done my fall cleaning and when I admitted to having no house I called my own, she waxed expansively sympathetic.

The next morning we drove on with small compunction. The barnyard was not so æsthetic by day as it had seemed by night. The woman donated us a basket of lunch, sandwiches cut generously thick; higdom, a kind of pickle peculiar to that locality, and a glass of barberry jelly.

"Don't worrit yourself to return the glass," said the thrifty soul, "unless you happen-like to pass by this-away again."

Ten days of delectable weather followed, miraculous, as I look back upon it. Great-Aunt Susan followed us with neat purple-ink letters at occasional post-offices which we forewarned of our coming. But we were beyond the pale of purple-ink elegance. We continued as happy as kings and queens. We had some days since decided that "Apartments to Let" communicated no answering thrill to our pulses, and now we looked for our patrimony on blown hill-tops or beside laughing brooks. But we did not at once light upon our veritable heritage. The wonderful weather continued, wonderful because so rare, the opportunity thus to know intimately November contours and tints; a northern sky and earth in an atmosphere of southern balm.

On the tenth day, by the grace of Him who loves lovers, we found ourselves at Chenandilla Valley. It was noon when Sweet Emma Moreland first sniffed the green herbage before the village inn.

The village wore the freshly washed countenance of a Sunday child. The grass was so vivid in front dooryards that one expected, by all laws of primer congruity, to see lambs nibbling there. There was such a circle of vanishing hills about the undulating horizon as suggested the beatific end of Christian's journey. There was a river as placid as music and willows as pensive as a young maid's reverie. The autumn branches, like old yellow lace, shivered against a tiny breeze.

At tea-time the hostess of the Sweet-William apologised for lack of variety in the fare. David replied with cordiality that bread and butter, Dutch cheese, and apple-sauce was a fit repast for kings.

"I had a boarder once," said the little, crooked, brown lady, wistfully, "who spoke like you; his voice was just like the church-bell a-ringing. He was Elder Babcock's cousin. You be'n't no kin to him?"

He sorrowfully admitted no kinship. The brown lady hovered about us as we ate our bread and butter and apple-sauce. She regretted that we were not fond of cake, of which she had baked three kinds that day, as well as doughnuts and cookies.

"We country folks are great hands on cake," she said, humbly.

How did she know that we were not country folk? I am sure that if any one ever possessed a country soul, it is I. I can sit for hours on a stump in a wood and vegetate as the ferns do.

When I aroused myself from my meditation, David was negotiating with Mrs. Sweet-William concerning a new-laid egg for his breakfast.

"I'm keeping only one biddy," said the lady, "but if you was to stay steady, I could make out to buy a pullet of Aunt Patience. Then you could each of you have your egg in the morning, and when you come to go, a nice dinner for you."

The next day or two we wandered about the little town, between which and ourselves there sprang up an instant affinity. Hooded ladies—for the month was November, to which season the hoods were a mark of deference—raked leaves and banked up rose-bushes on tiny lawns. Elderly gentlemen in ample garments of nondescript cut and colour, gathered windfalls for the cider-press. A little boy, with taut elbows and erect chin, furiously choo-chooed down the middle of the street. Lest we might be alarmed, he stopped (with difficulty, so great was his momentum) and explained that he was "a engine-car."

When golden five o'clock came, the farmers went by with rattling milk-cans and the original "engine-car" steamed slowly down the valley and with decorous dignity drew up on the grass-grown tracks of the Chenandilla station. It bore upon its shining

side the frightful legend Pendragon, but seemed an innocent-mannered dragon, with one lonely car for abbreviated tail. A few parcel-laden passengers alighted and were greeted by their waiting friends with the respect attendant upon those who betake themselves to foreign parts and return home enriched. The official who combined in himself the duties of conductor, brakeman, porter, and stock-owner of the road, sprang backward with his step in hand, and the Pendragon departed loathfully on its way.

During one of our walks an ancient citizen saluted us and offered us the use of his boat.

"But look out for the rapids," he warned us, as we embarked at the foot of his garden. "There be a turlble whirlypool down the river a piece."

David, with characteristic recklessness, insisted on taking the rapids, but they were not of the awful character that the old man's tone suggested. I think the latter had preserved from his infantine training that terror of the "whirlypool," which had probably many times wrecked his pea-pod flotillas on the snarling pebbles. Upon our return to port beneath a venerable willow, we were met by the solicitous boatman, and, as an expression of gratitude for our escape, he urged upon us plentiful potations of his cider. The cider wore the ruddy complexion of claret, an appearance which we failed not to comment upon, much to the delight of the simple soul. He then confided to us, quite as some old epi-

cure of a Carthusian might impart to a favourite crony the secret of his golden cordial, that the cider was thus made roseate by an infusion of beet-juice. In suppressed tones, that took their cue from his, we promised not to publish the secret to an eager world.

During our days of country driving, our taste had become established on many points previously hazy. We had gradually educated ourselves as to what must be and what must not be, in our house of great content. The sound of running water, the shadow of a tree, a little spring flower-bordered, a hill, a boat-landing, a fair distant prospect, kind neighbours, and the seclusion of a lane. There were many lanes in Chenandilla, all were secluded, and the neighbours were kind. A tender appreciation of our presence seemed to permeate the place. Emma Moreland had grown very fond of her stall-comrade and whinnied messages to him on every possible opportunity. We began to feel mightily pleased with ourselves, as if our very steps breathed beneficence.

Daniel, the little boy with whom we had an early acquaintance, volunteered to guide us to the Look-Off. When we reached that dizzy pinnacle, he told us how, one snowy day, as he stole through the underbrush, he came upon a rabbit sitting on the ledge that is as a sill to the forest window whence one looks off from the wooded top of Mount Hemlock.

"There he set, just as nice as a person, looking off from the Look-Off Place," said Daniel, with the awed and innocent eyes of the very young. "What do you s'pose he was a-doing of?"

"Perhaps just enjoying the view, like ourselves," I answered.

"He came out to see how the great Lord made it, I guess," said Daniel, approvingly. "Golly! He made it quick and He made it good!"

After supper, we went hand in hand down the village street (there was but one), and hit upon a trail new to us, meandering along the river's edge. A young moon, feather-soft, flaked the dimness of twilight. Here and there small lights pricked the hills. Little sky-stars, also, hinted at themselves and then fled away. The trail led us to a knoll which was a stone's-throw (David's) above the river. A cow-path wound hoofily around a beech-tree. The impact of hoofs indicated the presence of a spring. We heard it gurgling contentedly under a mat of leaves. We stood on the knoll and surveyed a fair prospect. David put his arm about me.

"You and I," he murmured.

"The house of great content," I said, very softly.

We regarded our patrimony in tenderest silence, the kind that angels and lovers speak.

"The north light for my studio will be here," said David, after a while, diagramming the air suggestively.

"And oh, what a charming outlook for the kitchen window," I exclaimed, turning my back to him and framing a lovely reach of river between my two hands. "But the cow-path must be condemned."

"It's rather paintable, don't you know?" said David, provokingly. He is well aware of the deep-seated antipathy between me and the bovine race. In this matter, etiquette books to the contrary, I refuse to put myself second.

"An occasional cow in the kitchen is a mere detail," added David, and then sealed my lips against reproaches, there in the young moonlight under the beech-tree.

"I think this bank will be blue with forget-me-nots in the spring," said he, kneeling by the hidden voice of water.

"And we can plant lilies-of-the-valley and iris by the river-edge," I cried.

"And you will pose for me there in a violet gown."

"Let's start right off and buy the land."

Feverish visions danced before my eyes of a rival procession striving to outbid us for this heavenly spot.

"Wait," said David, teasingly. "You run and buy the land, while I get the carpenter to start the house."

"The masonry comes first," I replied, with a display of practical knowledge that David did not ex-

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pect. We laughed and called each other children, and went back to the inn. We stopped on the way to say good-night to Sweet Emma Moreland. She nosed in David's inside vest-pocket for her accustomed lump of sugar. I have since persuaded him to put such goodies in an outside pocket, and have found that it saves considerable wear on his clothes. Oh, I am become sadly practical since those early days!

The prayer-meeting bell was gathering in its flock. A dear, pale, tall lady, in a fluff of shawls, stopped to speak with us. She was Aunt Patience, whose pullet, by the way, proved most conscientious in her attention to our daily breakfast.

"I heard you thought of staying with us," said Aunt Patience, with quaint stateliness, "and I wished to bid you welcome." She spoke as one who speaks for her people, and indeed, as we afterward learned, Aunt Patience had long been arbiter of courtesy, rather than of fashion, in Chenandilla.

"If you desire a kitten, I can offer you your choice of five, well-bred and gentle creatures, every one. My Angora cat, Gwendolen, has recently become a mother."

Nothing could have outdone the grave respect in her mention of Gwendolen. We thanked her as gravely, parried successfully an invitation to the meeting, and passed on. The good people went forth, the processional lanterns twinkling by intervals through Chenandilla's lanes and by-paths.

David painted a memory-picture that night, November Moonlight, and I wrote a poem.

THE HOUSE OF GREAT CONTENT

There is a certain gracious garth I know
Unwrought by human hand,
Most like a faery garden in a book
Whereon no mortal man may ever look,—
This lovely croft of land.

Not far away the sober highway creeps,
My pleasaunce heeding not;
Its calm of mountain curves in pure embrace,
Blue-windowed into realms of heavenly space
About the joyful spot.

A fair green meadow in a river bend
By whispering willows crowned;
A sweep of hillside like a gallant wall,
And lone upon its ledge a pine-tree tall
Guard this enchanted ground.

It hath a spring, bordered divinely blue
With amulet of flowers,
A tender isle that fringed with elder is,
Where fireflies weave their silent symphonies,
Spangling the twilight hours.

So cunningly within the hills 'tis set
In happy youth apart

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It seems beyond the ken of toil and time,
Lispings the little river's intimate rhyme
 Deep in its lyric heart.

Beloved, let the stranger world go by
 In futile wonderment
While, some rich day, there builds for you and me
Between the willows and the plumed tree
 A House of Great Content.

This is how we came to the Valley. Of the things between then and now there is not time to tell, but of the making of this book, one word. It is not a made book, as other books are made, but wrote itself from day to day in the lips and in the eyes of the little kings and queens that came to share our kingdom. Mine was the hand that translated with pen and paper. That is all.

Belinda was the first queen over us. She was named by Great-Aunt Susan and received in recompense a gold spoon and mug, upon both articles her own name proudly perpetuated. These emblems she wielded with all the authority of those born to crown and sceptre. And this despite Great-Aunt's repeated and lucid exposition of the fact that a mug and a crown are not interchangeable emblems. I myself bowed before Belinda's taste, for the gold mug sat very quaintly among her red-gold curls.

Brother John came next, a little man from his earliest babyhood. He was famous at that time for

sitting backward at table. Especially when we entertained guests did he thus demonstrate his disapproval of our gregarious habit. We were vouchsafed only the sight of his mop of straw-coloured hair and his square cambric back, except for such brief glimpses as were compelled by the precarious passage of spoon to mouth. Brother John spurned assistance. He would walk alone or not at all, such was his scorn of the effete and unmanly grown-up aids. The cruel pitfalls that nature set for his pride he encountered with a baby fortitude almost heart-rending. To stand in silence with his face to the wall was the only indulgence that, after overmastering calamity, little Brother John allowed himself. But the expression of his face, during those tragic periods, the world never knew.

The kingship of little John was brief. In his own words, "I became, as you might say, really a man when the babies decided to get born."

David and Beulah grew up together in the mystic bond of twinhood. Beulah's first recorded speech was in reverent admiration of David's five pink toes, thrust at her by the little lad when she cried for nourishment. David first essayed the unaided strength of his legs in a frantic effort to clutch little Beulah from the yawning chasm of the coal-scuttle, for which she yearned. Upon the ensuing dual catastrophe it is needless to dwell.

But now I am becoming motherly-reminiscent, a distinctly unliterary tendency, and not to be en-

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couraged in a book. When I take my pen in hand nowadays I fall to prating or dreaming, so I must here put a period. I have set down these verses with small effort at literary form, in some cases just as the babblings came from the children's lips. At times I have found Beulah's unlettered scrawls on the skirts of her paper dolls or on the shaving curls which she wears when she is a princess. I have been unseen amanuensis at the tea-parties and games, I have played eavesdropper when David hobnobs with his beloved Mrs. O'Hara at the windy clothes-line. More often I have interpreted the dim fancies in the depths of wonderful child-eyes. I would that those who read this little book could see with me the group which is part and parcel of my life: John, his brave forehead and out-door blue eyes wide with the fearless sun; Belinda's splendid head, her dear, practical pout, and the capable, sensitive hands that know their uses; David's bandit bright look, and the magic of his voice; and Beulah, remote, grey-eyed Beulah, with the wistful quiver to her lips, and a heart that almost breaks with love for her world.

Of the Littlest One, who came and went, I can say nothing, for her fingers are still about my heart. Beulah understands best.

David, my first king, leans over me as I fold this last page.

"You and I, dearest, are not in the book," he says.

"Yes, sweetheart, for our children are ourselves."

DAVID'S POEM

DAVID THE FIRST is not a poet, but once he wrote a poem. It happened before he knew me, and yet he says it was inspired by me and sums up all his unmated yearning for me. He says he will never write another, for I have been his Poem ever since. David does not know I am putting it into the Book.

My soul cries out with longing
For that dear house my home:
It crowns the end of every way
Down which I roam.

It hath a portal open
Unto the happy sun,
And windows star-embroidered
When day is done.

But best of all and dearest,
Serenely set apart,
I see her waiting for me,
The Woman of my Heart.

Her hands are made for loving,
Her lips for stainless truth,
And her clear eyes are beautiful
With God's own youth.

Kings and Queens

My soul cries out with longing
For that dear house my home;
It crowns the end of every way
Down which I roam.

Yet have I never seen it,
Though still it beckons me
With sweet and poignant promise
Of what shall be.

KINGS AND QUEENS

THE little brown schoolhouse is the cave
Where gnomes and goblins dwell;
The bell that rings for School Let Out
Is a strange enchanted bell.

We are not children any more,
We are very grand and old;
We are kings and queens this afternoon
With garments of pure gold.

The doggie is the star-man,
As wise as you please,
Reading the skies at night-time,
The moon and Pleiades.

The parrot is the jester
Who sits upon the gate,
Making the sad queen laugh and laugh,—
Named Green-Cap the Great.

Here are Samarcand and Andalusia,
Wild wonderful places all;
The chestnut-tree is Italy
And the pasture fence where the cow looks over
Is the hoary Chinese Wall.

If you wave your hands, mother, and cross your
darling feet,
You will see our bright procession a-dancing down
the street;

Kings and Queens

Glitter and shimmer and red-booted pages
And the leopards behind in their glorious cages.

You will hear the trumpets like billows of the sea,
And when they sound the loudest
And the dust flies the highest
And the glitter is the brightest,
Then come We!

Those kings and queens on their milk-white steeds,
Look, mother, they are—We!

THE BOOK OF BELINDA



A CROSS LADY

MISS Deidamia Mizpah Town
Is a cross lady.
She has her parlour shades drawn tight
And keeps her kitchen shady.

No streaks of sun, no pots of flowers,
No cat or kittens tiny,
But such a brushed-up, empty look,
All black and cold and shiny.

I went to buy some eggs of her
For David's birthday party.
I said, politely as I could,
"Your roosters keep a-laying good."
She said: "Is that so, smarty?"

POSSESSIONS

ALL the things that people have
Look just like them ;
My father's tall, plain napkin ring,
And mother's silken hem.

David's old cap out in the hall,
I'd recognise in Jericho,
'And Beulah's sash is so like her,
They could find it by the Hoang-Ho.

Our Katie's apron on the hook
Looks so supremely Katified
It shows me all the rest of her,
Even the way her hair is tied.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

DAVID

NOW what would you do if a horrible lion
Came roaring out of that wood?

BELINDA

I should climb right up the butternut-tree
Or run as fast as I could.

JOHN

Ha, no such cowardly acts for me;
By jingo, I'm not of that sort.
I should like pretty well to pepper that lion
With a dose of 22 short.

BEULAH

Oh, John, how very unkind you are,
I hope that your wish won't be granted!
It is better always to be polite,
And ask him first if he wishes to fight;
For perhaps that lion is enchanted,
And is a poor lady trying to speak,
And it sounds rather loud but she feels very meek!

THE END OF THE WORLD

“**H**OW do you suppose the world will end?
Burst to shivers like a rocket,
Or close up gently like a book,
Or snap like Belinda's locket?”

“I think 'twill all burn up like this,
In the twinkling of an eye!
And when we open our lids again
Lo, a new earth and sky!”

“That will be very inconvenient,
And some one might get hurt.
Suppose we are just eating dinner
And haven't had dessert?”

“Or s'pose,” said John, “we're at croquet,
And I've just knocked your ball,
Sha'n't I have time to raise my mallet
And twack you out, at all?”

“It must depend on what we're doing,”
Said Beulah, rather slow.
“If I was playing checkers with father
And each had one more go,

“I'm sure that he would smile and bow
In his politest way,
‘Excuse me, Mr. Angel, one minute;
We've two more turns to play.’”

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Then mother's voice came: "Children, hush!

The baby's going to sleep."

"By jingo," whispered John, "here is

A proposition steep.

"What would the Trumpeting Angel do,

Who calls the quick and dead,

If mother raised her finger: '*Hush,*

The baby's gone to bed!'"

THE WEEK

THE whole round week is parcelled off,
And each day has its sign:
There's washing-day and ironing-day,
And bake-day, rain or shine.

There's scrubbing-day and sweeping-day,
And Sunday for the collection-penny,
Then washing-day again, and so
There's not one day too many.

How very nice it would have been,
O mother dear, for you,
To have some extra days put in
With nothing much to do.

If there were ten days in the week,
You would have three for playing,
Six days for work and still the seventh
For preaching and for praying.

MY CHILDREN

WHEN I grow up and am a big lady
I'm going to have children three;
Beowulf and Theodolind
And Persis their names will be.

I may decide on triplets, too,
Three little laughing girls,
As beautiful as three princesses,
With nut-brown dangling curls.

My children will obey me well,
Go quickly when they're sent;
I do not always mind mamma,
But that is different!

WHEN BEULAH WENT OUT OF
HER HEAD

MY sister Beulah once got sick;
She had the mitten-fever;
She said, "Go 'way," when I peeked in,
And cried when mother went to leave
her.

'Twas shameful how they petted her,
And she did act the queerest.
She wanted orange-juice all day,
She did, when oranges was dearest.

I wasn't 'lowed to suck the skins
Nor sit and hear her talking
About that Chinaman by the door
And Dark Things on the ceiling walking.

One night she went out of her head,
Nurse said to Doctor Ball;
I don't know how she managed it,
Her ear-holes being rather small.

'Twas such a funny way to go,
Not asking leave of mother;
And if she never had come back
That loose head would have been a bother.

Kings and Queens

They said she wandered all night long,—
And it was in December!
I'm going to ask her when she's well,
I do hope that she will remember.

Where did she go, and why she went,
And how she did get out,
And did the head have dreams at home,
With Beulah wandering about?

A BOTANICAL ADVENTURE

I FOUND a flower named Bouncing Bet
This morning in the roadside grass;
I got my skirts all sopping wet.

I took it to the Botany class
And Teacher showed us very plain
The little pistol that it had,
Beneath the Maggie flying-glass.

And then we wrote down in our books:
"The poplar name is Bouncing Bet
And it is found in wayside nooks,
Escaped from gardens where it grew;
But sometimes cultivated yet."
Dear Bouncing Bet! how spirited
And fine that was of you!

To run away and to escape
From stiff old gardens long ago
And paths made prim by hoe and tape.
A brave adventure to have planned!
Oh, I can see you, stooping low,
Creep slyly underneath the gate,
Your little pistol in your hand.

THOUGHTS DURING RECESS

THE girls keep saying little rhymes
Out in the yard at recess times:

One, two,

Button your shoe:

Why, it's more than a mite of a baby can do.

Dear little shoe,

White or blue,

And the pink little toes that are peeping through.

Three, four,

Walk the floor,

Toddle about from cradle to door!

I will take his hand

To help him stand.

See him walk alone! He feels so grand.

Five, six,

Pick up sticks.

He has forgotten his darling tricks.

He's a little man

And he helps all he can.

Oh, I cannot say the others they had;

Some were merry and some were sad.

—'Leven, twelve,

Toil and delve.

Poor little children, I pity them so!

Is that the reward for being eleven?

I think I had better always keep seven.

Thirteen, fourteen,

Girls are courtin'.

Kings and Queens

What that may be I have not found;
It has a rosy cosey sound.
I think I'll like it by-and-by;
At least, I'll try.

LITTLE DEAR

THERE is a girl moved in next door,
They call her Little Dear;
She is the worstest-mannered child
That ever I did hear.

She screams when people comb her hair;
I tell you, she is bad.
She says the loveliest prayers at night
And stamps when she is mad.

She ran out in the yard one day
Without her shoes and dress!
She throws her spoon upon the floor
And calls her food a mess.

And when she visits other children
She never likes the game,
And when we go to visit her
She's naughty just the same.

But when "Papa" comes home at night
With parcels from the city,
She acts as sweet as anything,
And all dressed out so pretty.

He lets her ride upon his shoulder,
As he comes down the walk;
You'd think she was a perfect angel;
You'd ought to hear her talk.

Kings and Queens

I rather guess that if he knew
Her sassy words to me
He wouldn't call her Little Dear
And trot her on his knee.

But papas have such simple ways
And are so trusting, too,
I'd sort of hate to tell him all
The things I've saw her do.

THE RED SEA

“LET’S play the Israelites,” said Beulah,
“Escaping from the Promised Land;
I will be Moses leading them
And holding up my hand.”

“Let me be Moses,” David cried,
“Because I soon shall be a man,
And have a splendid beard like Moses;
You know you never can!”

But Beulah answered that she knew
Much better how to prophesy;
“Besides that, Moses he wore skirts,”
Said she, “and so do I.”

We played it in the barn up-stairs
Because we needed lots of room.
John said he would be Pharaoh’s horses,
And ride the stable broom.

“Then I am Pharaoh,” David shouted,
“But what shall poor Belinda be?
Oh, yes, because her hair is red,
Let her play the Red Sea.”

“No, I am Aaron,” I replied,
“I’ll go and get a blossoming rod;
Or else I’ll be the Israelites
And walk across dry-shod.

Kings and Queens

“The hole that drops into the manger
Will make a nice Red Sea for you,
Where Pharaoh’s horses and his men
Can easily fall through.”

JACOB GREEN

THERE is a boy on Penny Street,
His name is Jacob Green.
He has a Maltese pussy cat.
He treats her dreadful mean.

He tweaked her by the tail one day.
She humped her back and spat.
He said he wasn't sorry, neither.
She was nothing but a cat.

I told him what I thought of him,
And the next day, I guess,
He was took sick and had a nurse
Who wore a striped dress.

I grewed a flower in a pot.
They called it hyacin't'.
I took it round to Jacob Green.
'Twas pink as peppermint.

It came up from an onion bulb;
'Twas raggedy and slim.
I said it wasn't very nice,
But it made me think of him.

I bought, too, from the candyman
A splendid sugar-stick
For Jacob, then I hurried home
As tight as I could lick.

Kings and Queens

For it was raining just as hard,
 My legs got wet and wetter;
But when I thought how kind I was
 I seemed to like him better.

REGENERATION

I TOLD you once of Jacob Green,
The dreadful boy he was;
There's no one else in all the world
Would do the things he does.

He ate his lunch one day in school,
Right in the 'rithmetic class,
And when the teacher called him up
He gave her awful sass.

Last summer at the Baptist picnic
He stepped upon a toad,
And when there was a funeral
Played Injun in the road.

And after that he had a fever.
I guess it was the sin
A-itchin' in his hands and feet
That kind of settled in.

Jacob was sick the longest time,
A year or most seven weeks,
And when he came to school again
He had the whitest cheeks,

And all his clothes were spick and span,
And my! he looked so clean.
The boys they mocked him impolite
And snickered, "*Mister Green!*"

Kings and Queens

When teacher marked him in her Book
And called him "Jacob Dear,"
I thought he'd make a face at her
Unless he didn't hear.

But when she tapped him on the cheek
And said, "Who stole these roses?"—
That was most wonderful of all—
He smiled as meek as Moses!

THE TRICKSY DREAM

WHEN I woke up this morning
The cuckoo clock struck eight.
I knew there was no time to lose,
That I must pop right out of bed
Or else I should be late.

But still I lay in bed awhile,
Thinking that I was out of bed.
I thought that I was dressing, too,
With heavy hands and feet of lead.

I tried to hurry but I couldn't.
Oh, what a dream to trick me!
Yet all the time I was dream-dressing
My conscience seemed to prick me.

Then suddenly I sprang straight up.
Lo, it was almost nine!
I wasn't dressed a single bit,
For all that dream of mine.

I stumbled off to school, I did.
A lump was in my throat.
The janitor that makes the steam
He winked as I hung up my coat.

Oh, I went creeping to my seat,
For teacher wore a solemn look
And gave me, with an awful smile,
A long black Mark within her book.

Kings and Queens

And when I told her of my dream
That was the reason I was late,
The front Seats they began to snicker.
Teacher just called the Reading Class
And made my Mark a little thicker.

MOTHER'S FACE

COME and sit where I can see you,
Mother dear!
I've been sick a long, long time,
'Most a year.

P'raps it is a shorter time,
Just a week;
I don't want to play or read
Or to speak.

But I want to see your face
All the time,
For it makes my thoughts go happy,
Like a rhyme.

I have counted all the figures
In my shawl;
And my head begins to swim
With the cracks upon the wall.

If you go a single minute,
Mother sweet,
Then I feel that horrid shiver
Climbing up my feet.

I love to see you sitting there,
In your old blue gown.
You are like a peaceful moon
Smiling down.

Kings and Queens

You don't need to sing to me,
Nor to lift your hand;
Oh, you have the loveliest face
In the whole wide land.

I've been sick a long, long time,
'Most a year.
Come and sit where I can see you,
Mother dear!

THE BOOK OF JOHN





HOUSES

MRS. O'HARA has a house
That seems to say, Oh, Oh!
The blinds all off, the gate askew,
Opening surprised big eyes at you.

But Miss Deidamia's little cottage,
Its mouth is thin and grey,
And the closed shutters frown at you
And murmur, Go away.

Our house is pleasantest of all,
With poppies down the walk,
And hollyhocks that lean to you.
The porch has arms that reach right out,
And the knocker seems to talk.

At twilight when I hurry home,
My dripping skates across my back,
The twinkling windows smile at me
And I smile back.

BOYS AND GIRLS

“I ’M awful glad I’m not a girl,”
Said John,
“To wear a skirt and shake my curls,
And tie pink ribbons on.

“I’m awful glad I am a boy,”
Said John,
“To play baseball, be sensible,
And have a gun.”

“Pshaw, I don’t care,” Belinda said,
“Maybe I’ll wed an earl!
Besides, it’s much more ladylike
To be a girl.”

OBSERVATIONS OF AN ENTO-
MOLOGIST

THERE are many insects in the grass,
With many different tricks;
Some are all legs and some all eyes,
And some look just like sticks.

These roll into a little ball
And make believe be dead;
Those sit as still as anything
And stare at you, instead.

Some insects creep as carefully
As hands around a clock;
While others are the kinky kind
That go off at half-cock.

Some hang themselves from empty air,
Like acrobats they dangle.
There's one that perches on a stone,
In shape like a triangle,

Pleasing to my artistic eye,
So I began and drew it;
Until he flared right up, and lo!
He jumped as high as Jericho.
I wish that I could do it.

Kings and Queens

Some insects lose a leg or two
With perfect willingness,
And others perch upon a blade
And shamelessly undress;

When they have finished they've become
A different kind of bug;
They fold their wings and walk away,
So virtuous and smug.

I think they are adventurers,
And that's their little trick,
Making themselves aliases,
Old Sleuth or Diamond Dick.

MISS DEIDAMIA TOWN AND
THE LIE

MISS DEIDAMIA MIZPAH TOWN,
The corners of her mouth turn down;
She is frost-bitten, pink and dreary,
Fat as a duck, but not so cheery.

I had been off with dog and gun
And came home late when day was done.
It was so dark I almost flew,
When there piped a voice, "Oh, is that you?"

"Yes, ma'am," I truthfully replied,
Though afterward she said I lied.
She thought that I was Granger Strong,
And asked me where I'd been so long,
And other questions rather strange,
Considering I was not Grange.

Yet I am I, no matter who
The other person thinks is you;
So when she asked if that was me,
What different answer could there be?

THE SNOW LADY

OUT in our garden stood a lady,
Her breast was white as snow,
For it was snow;
Her breast was white as snow,
I swear that this is so;
And yet her heart was cold as ice,
This, too, I'll prove you in a trice.
Her figure dazzled all beholders,
Especially on a sunny day;
And melting eyes she had, in truth,
For once they melted quite away.

HYPOCRISY

YOU'D like to see my dog go lame
When I have boxed her ears;
I tell them that's her little game,
But still those foolish girls shed tears.

"Poor little dog! You cruel boy,
How can you be so mean!"
And Roxy limps with wondrous skill
To show how cruel I have been.

But if she hears the dinner-bell,
Or father's pistol-shot,
That dog recovers mighty quick
And streaks it for the happy spot.

SPORTING BLOOD

WHEN she sees a running hen,
It's too late to call her then;
Like an arrow from the bow—
Land, you ought to see her go!

Certainly I foot the bill,
But it makes them hopping still.
"Blooded fowl," they're sure to say,
"Best I've raised in many a day."

Roxy hangs her head for shame,
But she's happy all the same.

BARN-YARD ETIQUETTE

OUR yellow cat lay in the sun
After her morning meal was done,
Absorbed in tranquil contemplation.
The big grey rooster strutted by,
Peeking at her with one flat eye,
His comb cocked up in proud elation.

Staring at her he stood and stood
As if he were carved out of wood,
Demanding her attention mutely.
But she, her head between her paws,
Stretched out in peace her several claws
And thus ignored him absolutely.

If Laddie should come prowling near,
With stiffened tail and ragged ear,
Our cat would seem much more vivacious;
She would not look so bored and sleek,
But with exceeding haste would seek
A climate loftier and more gracious.

A SPELLBOUND AUDIENCE

WHEN Beulah tells her stories
To people who are busy,
She says: "Please let me tell you just
this un!"

And then they all pretend to listen:
Father paints on or mother sews and rips;
Katie she peels potatoes or she stirs and dips;
And every now and then they grunt politely through
their lips.
Father he says, "Ung-hung! (Where is my crimson
lake?)"
But mother says, "Hem-mm! (Two breadths is all
they take.)"
And Katie says, "Ang-ha! (I'll mix a chocolate
cake.)"

And then when Beulah finishes,
They do not always know it;
Father will dab his purple in,
Katie will grease her pudding-tin,
Mother will calmly mend,
Till Beulah says, "Please, don't you see,
It is the very end?"
Then father says, "Ung-hung!"
And mother says, "Hem-mm!"
And Katie says, "Ang-ha! Land sakes, it's four
o'clock."

THINGS

GROWN people do not seem to know
Things happen of themselves,
That books walk off just when you want
them,
And jars fall down from shelves.

"How did my damson jam get here?
I put it on the topmost shelf."
It's very simple to understand.
It climbed down of itself.

I cannot keep things in their place,
However hard I try.
They hide themselves or break themselves,
To unknown corners betake themselves.
Of course you never see them do it,
For Things are very sly.

THE HEN

“O H, is the hen a animal?”
I heard my sister say.
The truly animals have four feet,
Don't peck and scrabble when they eat,
And run in such a silly way.

A animal is more substantial,
Behaves more dignified,
Will sometimes stand quite still and think,
Knows how to take a proper drink,
And chews the cud or champs with pride.

The foolish hen, in my opinion,
Except a setting hen that's vicious,
Is just a rather large insect,
Of various colours, plain or specked,
And very needlessly suspicious.
Poor cackling things, they will not learn
Which way to go or when to turn,
(Though chickens are delicious!).

A LESSON IN PEDIGREE

PERCY is one of these Fauntleroy's:
He sits in a heap of Paris toys,
And he shuts his ears when we make a
noise.

He has little teeth like a row of pearls;
His nurse does him up in sausage curls,
And he walks on his toes like little girls.

One day in school he whispered to me
About his Jenny-o'-something tree,
"And you have none," he whispered to me.

I said I'd show him after class;
So I gave him a view of the sassafras,
And I said, "Do you see
Our family tree?"
As I switched his legs, the silly ass.

NOTE: *John was afraid his Book was going to be rather slim, so he supplemented it by these prose compositions.*

F. W.

BEING A BOY

TO be a boy is one of the greatest things that a girl could ever want to be, as you will soon see. I was once a boy and am still a boy, I am glad to say. When I was a little fellow about three years old David and Beulah were born and I became a man, as that is when a fellow begins to know what he is. There is a boy named George Gregory that lives just down the lane. He is my best friend. David my brother, George and I are often seen doing lots of things. We have a trapeze in the side of the yard and we all learned to perform on this. We used to have contests to decide which was the best man of us. David is little but he can fight like the deuce. Girls never fight with fists as we did. They are afraid of hurting each other, as you know most girls are very tender. We have an old grey horse named Emma (she is living yet) and she is gentle and we can do anything with her. We used to ride on her five or six at a time and whenever we wanted to get off we would just slide off behind. I remember one time when George and I were riding old Emma and my brother David was leading a colt that Beulah

was riding. We got out to the creek all right, but coming back as we turned Patience Corners old Emma wanted to get home in a hurry so she bunched up her feet and started to run like lightning. George was on behind me and we didn't have any saddle. When we were even with a pile of rocks that were in the road we both fell off together. George was on top of me and I was on top of the rocks and Emma was at home. Beulah was scared to ride any more that morning, which was funny, for it wasn't the colt that ran away. If it had been two girls that fell off it would have probably killed at least one of them, but you can't hurt a boy so easily. I had a fine time after my bruises were well.

It is jolly in the winter when big snows come. We build a sled big enough for several boys to ride on and so a horse can pull it. We hitch a little pony I have to this sled and then let a raft of other boys fasten their small sleds on behind the big one and then get the pony to running and then turn a corner right quick and throw all of the boys on the little sleds off in a snowdrift. Girls could never hang on to a sled and let a horse run and then get thrown off in a snowdrift without being hurt. But girls are nice just the same. There are some girls I like well enough to draw them up a long hill and not feel tired.

Pretty soon comes spring, the time for the farmers to commence ploughing and making the fields ready for grain. Father takes out his easel then and mother

plants wild flowers down by the river edge. The children help her and I bring her lady-slippers from a swamp nobody knows about but me and nobody ever shall, for they would go and pull them all up for the church on Sunday. On cool evenings we ride together around the country and father and mother have a good time like children.

A boy has got some hard work to do, too. There is different kinds of work, like school and combing the pony and being polite to company. What good is any boy if he doesn't have to work a little? It doesn't hurt him a bit, but just makes him get stronger and grow faster. There is nothing like being a boy the whole year round.

ON "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN"

BY JOHN

NOTE: *The children had a new teacher. They were instructed to write a "book-review," and consider the following points: General character of the book; circumstances under which it was written; class of people for which it is intended; your opinion of the characters.*

"UNCLE TOM'S CABIN" was written by a woman and it is a pretty good and a nice book for a woman to write. This is a large book. Most large books are dull but there is not many parts a person would need to skip in this book unless you are weak-minded like Jacob Green or in a big hurry to do something else. Jacob eats a pencil almost up every time he has to pass in a composition. This book was written by the author. She was doing housework while she wrote it but I guess she did not do much housework when she wrote the place about Eliza and the bloodhounds.

Little Eva is a nice child but I like Uncle Tom better. Little Eva is the kind of a little girl you read about in a story. I never knew any little girl just like her, (like she) and I don't think I should like her but in a book I suppose she is alright.

(Mother told me I shouldn't put that in about Jacob Green and the pencil but only yestiddy Teacher said quite distinctly that it was the "little personal touches" that make writing interesting.)

SPRING FLOWERS

By JOHN

TEACHER told me to write something poetic and full of imagination. She said spring flowers would be a good subject. She said here was an opportunity for "local colour." I have forgot the explanation of that, but I guess I understand anyway.

It doesn't seem to me that spring flowers is much of a subject. Spring flowers comes in the spring. If it is cold they come later. Sometimes they don't come at all. That is when you are a city child. I know this is so for we had a Fresh Air child onct and when he saw the grass he said, "What's all them?" Fresh Air children are very ignorant but they think they know it all.

Girls like to pick spring flowers. They put them on the Teacher's desk so that she will mark them easy. I did put some pansies on Teacher's desk onct but that was because I swiped them from Miss Deidamia's yard because she was cross to me about my dog and her hens. Boys don't care much about picking spring flowers unless boys like Percy that has thin ears and plays on the piano. Percy cries when he gets knocked down in Prison Gool. He wore a sun-bonnet when he went cowslipping with his grandmother. His mother has pink cheeks and a good many little curls. She said to my mother: "You

Kings and Queens

would hardly blieve I was the mother of a big boy like Percy." I said, "Oh yes, I would. Percy hasn't got much sense, even if he is big." I didn't mean to be rude. I told mother so afterward. I thought that was what Percy's mother meant.

I guess this is all I have to say about spring flowers. (I couldn't put any "local colour" in, because Belinda has hid her colour-box. She's getting dreadfully selfish.)

A BRAVE FELLOW

A S I was weeding in the garden,
Pulling up dock and yarrow,
I stopped to think and rest awhile
Upon the old wheel-barrow.

I watched a woolly caterpillar,
A fuzzy-wuzzy fellow;
His eyes were big, he was tipped with black,
And his middle strip was yellow.

He seemed upon a journey bent,
A serious undertaking,
To visit some far distant king,
His annual tribute taking.
He crawled around the sticks and stones
With infinite precaution.
Perhaps he feared an ambushade
Of Cossack or fierce Russian.

I put my foot across his path
To test the fellow's mettle;
He stopped and pondered at the base
Of Popocatpetl.
Whether to make a long detour,
Or take the route direct,
Or are there hidden perils here
The traveller should suspect?

Kings and Queens

At last he summoned all his courage
 To scale the giant boulder,
And then proceeded on again,
 Grown several minutes older.
And still, I think, he's toiling on,
 With heart that never flinches,
Though every weed a jungle is,
 And leagues his anxious inches.

WASH-DAY

MONDAYS the whole earth does their
washing;
Such a tubbing and a scrubbing,
Such a splashing and a swashing.

Suds and steam and windows sweated, dumping,
thumping;
Katie with her sleeves rolled up,
Piles of clothes and punching, pumping.

Boiler full of angry linen, bubbling, cooking;
I love to squeeze the bags of bluing in,
When Katie's at the line or isn't looking.

Talk about hard things to do! Is anything more
roiling
Than to have Katie roll her eyes
As if such work was toiling?

When well she knows that tubs of water have more
attractions
Than a hard bench in school all day
And doing hideous fractions.

THE POINT OF VIEW

SOMETIMES the road to Sunday-school
 Drags out so hot and dreary,
But that same road to go trout-fishing,
 It springs along so cheery.

I get so tired running errands
 I'd almost like to drop;
But when I'm playing hare-and-hounds
 I never want to stop.

A CONTEST ON PARNASSUS

“**I**’M going to make a poem,” said Beulah,
“This is the way ’twill go:
*Oh fairyland, oh fairyland,
I wish I could find you so!*”

*Are you hidden here in the hollyhock bed,
Or are you beyond the sun?
If I should travel ever so far——”*
“That is no poem,” said John.

“But here is one to show you how:
*Ho! saddle ye my steed.
I will ride like lightning with this fierce sword.
I will rescue her tho’ I bleed——”*

“Oh, where was he going?” Beulah cried,
“And what was the maiden’s name?”
“He was only a boaster,” Belinda laughed,
“For the steed has already gone lame.”

JOHN-A-DREAMS

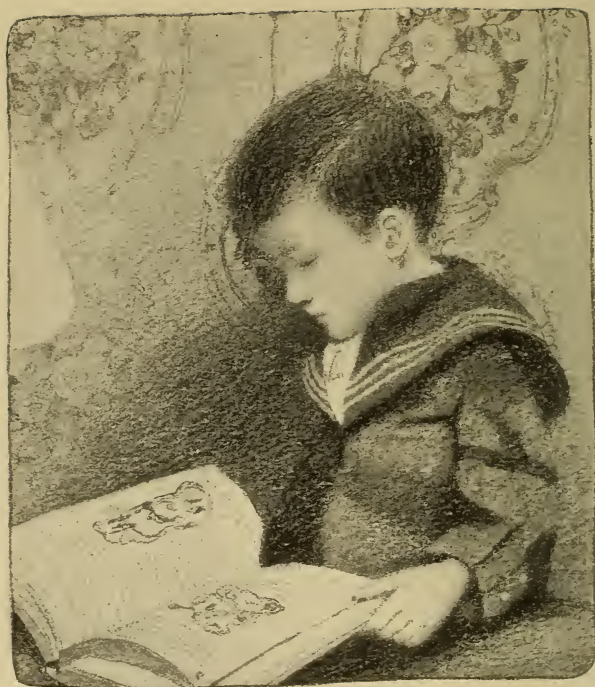
I DREAMED I was the sexton of the church
And there were wide pink bows on every
door.

I said I would untie the silly bows
And then, I'd not be sexton any more.

I dreamed that there were bottles in a row
With paper flowers on the pulpit stair;
I took the sexton's broom in sermon time
And brushed them with a clatter off from there.

Then they all yelled I was a wicked thing.
They shouted and they drove me from the room.
I had forgotten to put on my clothes,
So off I flew upon the sexton's broom
Up to the highest rafters of the ceiling
With such a bird-like and triumphant feeling.

THE BOOK OF DAVID



THE END



THE BLIND BEGGAR

SOMETIMES on a windy night,
When the whole world is drifted white,

I like to wander forth alone,
With father's cape around me thrown,

And imagine I'm a beggar,
Lean and blind and old,
Driven forth from every house
And shrivelling in the cold.

I shut my eyes to be more blind
And mutter as I blow along,
"Be kind to me! Be kind!"

Or else I huddle by the gate
And watch the firelight from our grate

Paint red the icy window-sill
And leave the shadows blue and chill,

Kings and Queens

I hear the laughter from within,
But I—I cannot enter in.

The teardrops down my cheek they steal,
And so I learn how beggars feel.

THE ISLANDER

DOWN below our garden runs the river,
Travelling off somewhere,
Shadowy with the trees,
Crumply with the breeze,
Full of little fishes trooping here and there.

There's a lonely Island far out in the river,
But the river is too wide to span,
And so deep I am afraid
To take off my shoes and wade.
I must wait till I have grown to be a man.

Often I sit and think about that Island,
Unto which I cannot go,
With its sunset grass
Where the glories pass,
And its golden wood like torches in a row.

Once I saw a Man upon the Island,
And his face was like a round red moon;
So I called to him aloud,
"Mr. Man, what is your name?
Are you wild or are you tame?"
Still above his scythe he bent and bowed.

Oh, that little Island in the river!
How I wish I were a few more years less young,
So to set forth and explore
All the wonders of that shore,
And to teach that Island-Man my mother-tongue.

FANCY'S HORN

I WANT to be a woodland hunter,
To sound a mighty horn,
To leap from bed, to chase the deer
With the first streak of morn.

"That's very fine," my father said,
"I'll buy a mighty horn,
That you may leap from out your bed
With the first streak of morn."

But yet I cannot seem to stir,
When chilly morning breaks,
For all that horn, until I smell
The pleasant buckwheat cakes.

DADDY-LONG-LEGS

DADDY-LONG-LEGS, Daddy-Long-Legs,
You have a little body
And hardly any head.
When do you go to bed,
And is there room beneath the clothes
For all your many legs?

Daddy-Long-Legs, Daddy-Long-Legs,
Please stop and answer me.
Say, have you seven grandchildren,
One child for every knee?
If I could spring along like you
Soon the whole world I'd travel through.

THE CREAKY ROCKER

GRANDMA had a creaky rocker
Where she used to rock all day,
And she loved to sit a-murmuring
When we all were at our play;
Half the time we would not listen
To what Grandma used to say.

Often in my bed at night-time
I could hear her rocker creak:
Then I knew that she was murmuring,
With her hand upon her cheek,
And the husky-throated rocker
Was politely trying to speak.

Grandma died and went to heaven
And she took the rocking-chair;
But I never dared to ask them
Though I saw it was not there.
Yesterday upon the mountain
Where the trees are bent and bare
Came a creaking far above me
From the top of the blue air;
And I knew that it was Grandma
On the cup-like floor of heaven
Rocking in her creaky chair.

PILGRIMS FROM BIRTH

I LIKE the vines that run away
And have their will;
I like the boughs that toss and dance
Around my sill.

I like the flowers that blow away
In trooping flakes;
I like the racing moon o' nights
And the star that shakes.

When all the house is dark and still
I want to go
Off with the wind who rides away
Shouting "Hollo!"

I like the birds that fly far off
In a zigzag wedge;
The clouds that sweep and lightnings that leap
On the evening's edge.

I like my worn-out shoes that stand
Behind the door,
For they were travellers born, and now
They travel no more.

THE COLLAPSIBLE CUP

I TRAVELLED once with Great-Aunt Susan.
She has a cup for drinking;
She said it was collapsible;
I asked her why, and she replied,
"You'd better do some thinking."
But when I thought aloud she cried,
"Shut up!"
Now did she mean me or the cup?

THE JOURNEY

MY Great-Aunt Susan wears three curls
And answers only when she must;
She wraps her bonnet in a veil
To keep away the dust.

She took me on the train with her.
It really was amazing
To see the fences jumping by
And all the ploughboys gazing.

A bunch of people got on once,
Brown-skinned, with eyes that twinkled;
They were all spangles and red roses
And when they walked they tinkled.

They laughed like little children, too,
Although they were grown folk;
Their hands kept going flippety-flop,
And the words were queer they spoke.

My Great-Aunt Susan was asleep;
I joggled her: "Ahem!"
I said, "Look at those pretty people!
I wish you dressed like them."

My Great-Aunt Susan stared at me.
"They are poor gipsy sort of creatures,
And clothed in execrable taste.
Behold their coarse, uncultured features!"

Kings and Queens

"I like them very much," I said,
 "They have a broad and cheery smile.
I wish I was their little boy,
 To eat and chatter all the while."

"Is this the way," my Great-Aunt said,
 "Your poor mamma has taught you?
If you display such vulgarness
 I shall regret I've brought you."

THEOLOGY

BEULAH, Belinda, me and John,
John said that God had long white hair,
But I said he had none.

Belinda said, "You foolish things!
God is a spirit up in heaven
And only has got wings."

Then Beulah said, "Once when it lightened,
I saw God walking on a hill
And I was not the least bit frightened."

Belinda said it was not true,
For only dead folks could see God;
She was the oldest and she knew.

Then Beulah she began to cry,
And said that God had shining feet.
John said, "That's right," and so did I.

Belinda said—I won't repeat,
For Katie brought our supper in
And so we all began to eat.

TRUANTS

IT was a morning fresh and cool
When we were starting out for school,
John with his slate and jogafly
And rithmetic and history;
I with my pop-gun and my slings,
Marbles and nuts and lots of things.
John said: "How jolly it would be
If we played hookey, you and me."
Now John is generally so good,
I thought I scarcely understood,
But I replied in a casual way,
"Let's hide our books and run away!"
Even a saint may fall from grace,
And so did John with a smiling face.

Oh, what a day that was of ours,
Roaming about for hours and hours!
I got so hungry pretty soon
I said it must be almost noon.
"We'll eat our dinner with a will
At that red house upon the hill,
With the stone dogs beside the gate.
Let's hurry or we shall be late."

John said, "But we don't know the lady,
And p'raps our places won't be ready."

Kings and Queens

“Oh, John, you have so little sense ;
It makes no jot of difference,
For, the world over, at twelve o'clock,
A dinner happens and people flock
And find their places at the table
And eat as much as they are able.
Whoever chances to pass through
Can just sit down, like me and you.”

SUPPER-TIME

IN winter Katie lights the lamp
At supper-time,
And then she brings the toast and tea,
She puts the plate of biscuit down,
Just from the oven, pinky-brown;
I follow her to see
What else there's going to be
That's nice, for tea.

My mother draws the curtains close
At supper-time,
To shut the horrid faces out
That peek in from the land of night;
And so we gather round the light,
My father strong and stout,
Belinda with her pout,
And John and me.

In summer the long level beams
At supper-time
Make spindling shadows on the grass
And flicker in a rainbow streak
On Beulah's napkin or her cheek;
They sparkle on the glass.
There's cottage cheese to pass
And strawberries for tea.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

GOOD stories always are too short,
The dull ones are too long;
Nice people always go too soon;
There must be something wrong.

I'd like to find a story-book,
The best I've ever read,
Which should go on for ever 'n' ever,
At least, till I was dead.

My porridge bowl is much too big,
The pie plate is too small;
The fattest cherries hang too high;
It isn't right at all.

I wish the cook would bake a pie
As big as that full moon,
And then a little one besides,
To eat to-morrow noon.

A CONFESSION

WHEN Great-Aunt Susan is displeased and
takes me on her knee,
And tells me of my sinfulness and how
she grieves for me,

I feel deep down within my heart angelically good,
And yet I fold my hands and act as if I understood.

But when my mother talks with me by evening candle-light

And says how dear and sweet I am and kisses me
Good-Night,

I feel deep down within my heart satanically bad,
And yet I never tell her so for fear to make her sad!

WAY OFF

I WANT to go way off, as far as ever I can
walk,
Way off from houses and from beds, from
lessons and from talk.

No other people will be there but only me alone,
Everything will be glorious and everything my own.

There will be ponies I can ride and lots of climbing
trees.
I'll never have to go to bed; I'll get up when I
please.

Perhaps I will come back sometimes a little while
to stay,
And tell them of the land I've found, but *never tell*
the way.

A GOOD IDEA

THE summer is so very hot,
The winter is so cold,
I think it would be rather nice
(The idea is my own)

If summer came in winter-time
When snow and hail were pelting,
And winter came in summer-time
When we were almost melting.

'LIZABETH'S LITTLE DOG

THERE is a little waddling dog
That lives across our street;
He has a sort of hoary face
And funny big black feet.

He has pop eyes that stick right out
And legs too far apart,
But little 'Lizabeth M. Penny
Loves him with all her heart.

"He is my dog," says 'Lizabeth,
"How nice he follows me!
And when I go to Christiandeavour
He's good as he can be.

"He sits upon the kitchen step,
Whimpering one little whim,
Then when the organ starts to play
He barks just like the hymn.

"Oh, I was awful sick one time;
I had to keep my room,
And play with checkers all day long
And eat things on a spoon.

"'N' when I went out-doors again
After that whooping-cough,
He was so glad he wagged his tail
And almost wagged it off."

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THE GIPSY LAD

WE have a splendid apple-orchard
With every kind of apple-tree,
Plump greenings and red astrakhans
And russets brown as they can be.

At evening when the day is done
The sky is like a golden cup,
And when the pickers have gone home
I gather all the gleanings up.

The frost is white upon the grass,
For it is late October weather,
And far away I hear the men
Go singing down some lane together.

I play I am a gipsy lad
Gathering in stealth forbidden fruit;
I crouch behind the crooked trees
And listen for the Romany lute.

I answer to the camp-fire call;
I have my bow all ready strung,
And then I hear my father's voice,
"David, the supper-bell has rung."

OUR WASHERWOMAN

OUR washerwoman is a lady
That washes clothes for other folks
And sings sad songs and tells me jokes.
*"Oh, the days of the Kerry dancing,
Oh, the sound of the piper's tune——"*

On Mondays when the day is fine
She hangs the clothes upon the line,
And then she rocks and laughs to see
The funny shapes that they will be:
"Oh, the days of the Kerry dancing——"

When my sailor blouse was puffed with the breeze,
"There's a broth of a bye, as plump as you please;
You've ate a full meal, so dhrop down on your
knees.

"There's Beulah's flannel dress to wring.
Musha, praise God it's coming spring!
It's afther her it takes its ways,
She's such a shrinking little thing!

"The feyther's duck suit that he wears when he
paints,
See him swagger and swing, by all the swate saints!
Now he's hung on the line, faith, I hear no com-
plaints.

Oh, the sound of the piper's tune——"

Kings and Queens

Our washerwoman is a lady
What wears a bonnet and a shawl
And never any gloves at all.
She has red hands and tells me jokes
And does kind things for other folks.
"Och, David machree, give a kiss to your Mary.
You've the look of the bye I was bidden to bury,—
Oh, the days of the Kerry——"

THE WOODCHOPPER MAN

AWAY up on the mountain there's a wood-
chopper man,
I can hear his axe go all the day,
Krug-kring-kring.

When I wake up in my bed
And the sky is streaked with red,
Comes that lonely chilly sound,
Echoing on the brittle ground,
Krug-kring-kring.

Do you like it on the mountain, O woodchopper
man,

Up between the pine-trees and the moon?
You cannot hear our kettle sing,
But we can hear your echo ring,
Krug-kring-kring.

When the snowflakes flutter blue
Often I sit and think of you
In some wild and drifted place,
With the storm across your face,
Away up on the mountain, O woodchopper man.

THE BOOK OF BEULAH



BEVERLY



PROVOKING BELINDA

“**S**UPPOSE it were as dark as pitch,
And you were by a dreadful sea,
And if you ran you would fall in
And if you stopped there was a witch
Hungry for you,
What would you do?”

“I’d rather stay at home,” said Belinda,
“And sleep all night in bed.”

“But please suppose that you were there,
And that there was no home nor bed,
And if you ran you would fall in,
And if you stopped she’d catch your hair
And crunch at you,
What would you do?”

“I’d rather stay at home,” said Belinda,
“And sleep all night in bed.”

DELPHIC UTTERANCES

WHEN winter nights blow bitterly
They sit and murmur low
Strange things of Him and Her and
Us
And others I do not know.

The door is open to my room
That I may keep more warm;
They talk about the Little Child.
"She is asleep. No harm."

The Little Child cannot be I,
For I am very old,
And I can see 'that highest star
Shake in the windy cold.

They sit and murmur by the fire,
"My dear, which would be best——"
And then the logs begin to roar
So I can't hear them any more
And never know the rest.

THE GREAT MEADOW

THE meadow is the sea,
 Deep, deep with grass
 Where the daisies dance like spray
 And the skimming butterflies play
 And the breeze runs through the grass
Rippling it all the way.
 Or the travelling storm-winds pass
Till the billows roll from pole to pole
Shimmering purple, green and grey.
The wind and the sun and the shadows of clouds
 Go racing over the sea
Where the daisies toss like spray
And the skimming swallows play,
And it shimmers and changes eternally,
Surging from purple to green and grey.
 Then the billows call to me,
And I open my arms out wide
 And I let my hair float free
And I swim for leagues and leagues
 Far out to sea.

STRANGE CITIES

THERE are strange cities under the sea
Where drowned folk dwell
Under the surge and under the swell.
The sound of their laughter comes to me
Like the moaning of a shell.
Their waists are wound with the oozy weeds
And their fingers drip
While fathoms above them floats the ship,
They sit and slip
Through their hands for ever strings of ocean beads.

There are strange cities in the sky,
Pale tower and dome,
Where high and silent ladies roam
And weave themselves large wreaths of flowers
For dances with the stars and hours.
I see the tall doors of their home,
And the shapes of their horses as they fly
Through the faint sky,
With purple feet and manes of foam.

THE GREY FEET

I OFTEN hear footsteps a-following behind;
But Katie laughs, "La, child, you hear them
in your mind."

I call them my Grey Feet because they seem to stray
Along the edge of evening when kittens love to play.

They rustle in the woods, they creakle on the stair;
I turn around to speak, but no one's ever there.

I think they are the Shadows of all the different
things,
The Shadows of tall trees, of ships and clouds and
kings,

Tiptoeing off somewhere, whispering, Hush and
Hark,
For shadows never must be seen after the streets
get dark.

I call them my Grey Feet, they go so soft and blind;
But Katie laughs, "La, child, you hear them in your
mind."

RUSTLING LADIES IN THE CORN

WHEN the frosts go stepping whitely,
And the gardens look forlorn
And you hear the gun-shots cracking
And the wild ducks blow their horn,
Then it is that rustling ladies
Walk between the rows of corn.
All the world is mist and broadness,
Trees begin to swim
As the evening dusk grows deeper,
And the hills float large and dim
While the moon like some shut lily
Blossoms on the mountain's rim.
Then those tall, mysterious ladies
Rustle through the dark.
Up and down they sweep and swishle,
And they whisper, "Hark!"
And the jewels on their bosom
Flicker with a wandering spark.
There are plumed knights among them,
Flash of mail and shine of spear,
Each one dancing with his dear.
Oh, the ripples of their laughter,
Oh, the ballads that I hear!
But by daytime they have vanished,
Shining skirt and glinting spear,
And the wind among the tassels
Is the only sound I hear.

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

THESE are the things I want to know
quite soon :

Who married Mr. Sun and Mrs. Moon,
And are the stars their children?

What makes the hilly roads climb up so slow

And then run down so fast, I'd like to know?

Where does the Wind live when he stays at home,

And where do bubbles go from out the foam?

Where does my Shadow sleep when I have gone to
bed,

And are there people anywhere with neither feet
nor head?

Why don't To-morrows ever come, though ever on
the way?

And whom does dear God play with when He wants
to play?

MY RUNAWAY SUNBONNET

I HAVE a dainty sunbonnet.
I stood upon a chair
And tied it to its proper hook
With very special care,
For that sunbonnet has a way
Of getting torn by brambles;
I know it slips outdoors at night
To seek adventurous rambles.

But the next morning after breakfast
That bonnet was untied!
That's how I proved its naughtiness,—
Roaming the country-side.
And so if mother says to me,
"How did you tear your hat?"
I shall reply quite truthfully,
"It was not I did that."

FROM THE LOOKING-ROCKS

THERE are so many, many roads
All leading off somewhere,
With fields like green and mottled rugs
And spotted cows like lady-bugs,
And little ants of men that pass,
And far-off waters grey as glass,
With specks of sails and houses, too,—
So many hills all faint and blue,
And white clouds fleecily unfurled,—
It is a very curious world.
But this most curious of all,
That on this round terrestrial ball
So many people there should be
Who don't know anything of me!

HATS

I LOVE to see the hats and caps,
Like birds each on his perch,
The little sunburned hats for school
And the pretty ones for church.

Some of them smile so grave and sweet,
And some are full of jokes,
But all of them have human faces
And look just like the folks.

They're very quiet when I'm by
And never even peep.
But oh! the times they have at night
When we are all asleep.

They go off flying by themselves,
The pink one goes to dances;
And all the gipsy hats and caps
Follow the fields and fences.

MY SISTER SILENCE

YESTERDAY I buried Silence
Underneath the lilac-bush;
All the robins whispered Hush!

Silence was my little sister
And we often played together
At the back door in the sun
And through the orchard when school was done.

Silence came and went so softly
No one knew that she was there
Except I, and I said nothing,
For the others would not care.

But she always walked beside me
With a face that shone,
And she lay upon my pillow
When I slept alone.

I am very sad this morning
Because Silence had to die.
No one understands but I.

BEYOND



BEYOND

I 'D like so much to get Beyond
But I am always Here;
I climbed up on the highest hill;
Oh, my legs ached, but farther still
I saw Beyond.

It's Over There, just one step past
Where the blue sky comes down.
I think if some one only would
Go first and hold It tight, I could
Get There at last.

Or else to take It by surprise
When things are still and grey;
Slip softly to that sunset ledge,
Then see off from the very Edge
With my own eyes.

THE LIZARD

THE lizard is a pretty creature,
Like amber through and through,
Sprinkled with spots like polka dots,
Hands that hang helpless with surprise,
A little tail that curls and flies,
And tender eyes of dew.

He hides behind a blade of plantain
In the tangles of the lawn:
He likes to get nooks dark and wet
In the damp moss or by the brook;
He wears a timid peeping look,
Most like a fairy fawn.

One day I put him in my pocket
Because I had no cup
To put him in—it was a sin
To make him tremble with great fear.
But when I fished him out, oh dear!
He was all shrivelled up!

NAUGHTINESS

WHY am I sometimes naughty
And sometimes very good?
What makes me act so different?
I never understood.

When in the morning I wake up
I don't know which 'twill be,
A day all full of naughtiness
Or a good day for me.

But when I go to bed at night
I know which I have been,
A Mamma's Joy all day or else
A creature full of sin.

"I thank thee, Lord, for my good heart,"
This is the prayer I make;
Or else: "Forgive my naughtiness,
Dear God, for Jesus' sake."

MYSTERIES

“**O**H, where was I before I was born?
Belinda, what do you say?”
“Why, you were dead before you
were born ;
All children start that way.”

“You can’t be dead till you are born ;
You’ve got no body on ;
And yet you have to be somewhere,
So’s to be ready,” said John.

“Oh, who began me at the first?
Who told me where to go?”
“I just began myself,” said Belinda,
“I’m the oldest and I know.”

DREAMS

BELINDA'S dreams are all mixed up;
John never dreams at all.
But I, I dream the strangest things
Of woods and witches, handsome kings,
And David dreams things, too;
Places we never knew,
We see them in our dreams.

I'm often running up and down
Through other people's houses:
I try to find the right way out,
Stooping so quietly about;
I feel just like a thief,
And oh, it's such a relief
When I let go that dream.

Last night I dreamed a horrid dog
Was following at my heels;
And I was on a lonely road,
The dog had shining teeth that showed.
I yelled but some one whispered, "Hush!
There is a robber in that bush."
It was a frightful dream!

THE GREAT SEA

I OFTEN dream of a great sea
As blue as ever it can be,

And people going off in boats
And shouting from a million throats,

A "vast innumerable throng,"
And huge white waves that dash along;

White hands like branches stretching out,—
I don't know what it's all about.

And David said he'd been there too,
Therefore we think it must be true.

I wish he'd find me in that crowd;
Next time I'll call to him aloud.

A DREAM TRAGEDY

I DREAMED a dream of brother John:
 "Go forth with sword and bow!"
He was tall and shining
 And I was proud of him so.

He stood on a hill in the sun,
 I saw him against the sky;
I called to him very loudly,
 I wanted to say good-bye.

And then I saw him no more:
 "O John, my tall little John!
 Where are you, John?"
I knew he was lying face down somewhere,
 And I not there!

MEMORY

THERE are just two kinds of remember:
You either remember clear as glass,
The way John does in arithmetic class,
Or else you sort-of-remember,
The way I do from my history book,
The way that dim reflections look
In the shiny black piano legs,
Or the shaky water of the brook;
That's how I sort-of-remember.

Now mother says I can't remember
The time before I did get born,
Seven years ago on Sunday morn;
And yet I sort-of-remember
My little body riding far
From the place where wings and circles are,
With voices flying up as dust,—
Till mother twinkled like a star;
That's how I sort-of-remember.

THE GREEN AND YELLOW BASKET

I-tisk-it, I-task-it,

A green and yellow basket,—

Oh, we went singing all around,
The wind in our sleeves made a whistling sound;
Some little maiden long ago
Carried that basket to and fro.
I think 'twas green with woven reeds
And stuck with dandelion weeds.

What was that multiplying rule
I tried to learn all day in school?

I-tisk-it, I-task-it,—

To-morrow she will ask it.

Seven times nine is sixty-three;
How very, very old 'twould be.
That little boy who looked at me,
His eyes were bluer than the sea.

I-tisk-it, I-task-it,

A green and yellow basket,

I sent a letter to my love

And on the way I lost it, I lost it.

That little boy he had a ball
And in the yard he tossed it, he tossed it.
Nine times seven is sixty-three,
Perhaps he tossed the ball for me,—

And on the way I lost it, I lost it.

I wish that I could go to sleep!
How can I when I think so deep?
 I sent a letter to my love,—
 One star below and two above!
When all the stars hang from the trees
I'll pick as many as I please.
"In France the folk are very gay,
They drink light wines and dance all day."
Our sewing-woman is from France
And yet I never saw her dance.

Who found the letter that was lost?
It was a pretty ball he tossed.
Seven times nine is sixty-three,
His eyes were bluer than the sea.
 I-tisk-it, I-task-it,
 The letter and the—basket.
That little boy is—seven times seven,
The stars go climbing up to heaven.

THE BACKDOOR

I LIKE the backdoor of our house
The very best of all;
The sun shines down upon the step,
The pump peeks round the wall.

Katie comes out in her blue apron,
To shell her pan of peas;
I sit and tell her fairy stories
And do just as I please.

Front doors are dark and dreadful;
They wear a bolt and lock,
And you go out with creaky shoes
Smoothing your Sunday frock.

Mother and father walking first,
Their Bibles in their hand,
And you with such a funny thirst
They never understand.

The kittens like the backdoor, too:
They blink there in the sun,
The grey puss with the milky eyes
And the puffy yellow one.

But mother says when I grow up,
And wear long skirts and rings,
I mustn't sit on backdoor steps
And play with cats and things.

Kings and Queens

But when I visit other children
That I must ring the bell
And sit upon a parlour chair
And ask them if they're well.

How sort of lonesome it will be!
It almost makes me cry.
Never to sit on backdoor steps
Nor make a nice mud pie!

LONELY

SINCE mother went away last week
There's nothing much to do,
There's nothing nice and nothing new.
The little kitten scratched my cheek,
The old cat is too dull to play.
It seems so long since yesterday.

I ran up-stairs this afternoon
To tell her something good,
And there her empty rocker stood;
I tried to learn a little tune
And this was all the notes would say:
"It seems so long since yesterday."

Since mother went away last week,
The house looks very big;
I tried to plant my seeds and dig,
But every time I went to speak,
I 'membered she was gone away.
It seems so long since yesterday.

A QUEER POEM

NOTE:—*Beulah picked up one day a volume of plays by a certain Belgian writer and became deeply absorbed by them. After awhile she came to her mother and said: "Mother, I have written a queer poem like that book of funny stories, the kind you're not meant to understand."*

THIS is my little boy
That I have made all myself.
"Ho-ho," cried Jacques and Jacqueminot,
"We will throw him down from the shelf."

He is not a doll, he will not break;
His heart is red and it beats.
I am going to name him a name you don't know;
We will walk like people up and down the streets.

"Ho-ho," cried Jacques and Jacqueminot,
"We will laugh at you and walk behind.
We will step on your skirts;
He is not alive,
And his eyes are blind."

They were an army of bulls all laughing;
Their laughter went off like guns.
I said: "Please don't! My little boy will wake up."
They tramped all day and they beat on my house:
"You have got to take us.
We are the only Real Ones."

A CRYING IN THE NIGHT

I WOKE up in the night
Because a foot went by my door,
And then I heard a little cry,
And then I fell asleep again
And heard no more.

But when the sun peeked in
And pulled me from my bed,
I heard again that little cry,
And so I knew it was no dream
But real, instead.

I tiptoed into mother's room,
And some one said, "Come here."
My mother smiled at me
Because upon her arm there lay
A little tiny dear.

How sweet it was of her,
Not even knowing our tongue,
To come to us so young.
To leave the nest of the dear Lord
And choose us of her own accord!
She cried to be let in,
Crying just like a bird.
How glad I am that mother heard!

THE LITTLE SHOE

BABY learned to speak our tongue,
Then she went away.
I remember like my prayers
The sweet words she used to say.

Baby used to laugh and coo,
Kiss us every one.
All the rooms seem empty now
With the laughter gone.

Baby had the dearest shoes,
She would creep from chair to chair.
Mother counted all the shoes
That the baby used to wear.

"Mother dear," said I,
"Let me keep that littlest one,
And please do not cry.
Babies like to go barefoot
Up there in the sky."

Mother held me to her heart,
But I ran away
With one shoe the baby wore,
And I cried all day.

THE CONSOLER

ONE day my mother looked so sad,
And I knew why;
I sat down on the floor by her
And made-believe be glad.

“Please smile one smile, O mother sweet!”
Then mother smiled at me;
It made me put my head right down
And sob upon her feet.

THE BACKWARDS ROAD

I KNOW that somewhere there must be
 A Backwards Road,
 A road like this,
 Leading to all old lovely times,
Picnics last year, forgotten rhymes,
 And dolls I used to kiss.

But every road beneath my feet
 Leads farther off
 From yesterday;
And when I creep into my bed
I feel it rock beneath my head
 Like ships upon their way.

If I could only find that Road,
 The Backwards Road,
 How quick I'd walk,
And change the naughty things I've done,
Pick up my playthings one by one,
 And hear the baby talk.

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